

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for exchanging data between at least one merchant site and at least one partner site across an interconnected computer network, the at least one merchant site employing a merchant database format and the at least one partner site employing a partner database format, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a clearinghouse site in communication with the at least one merchant site and the at least one partner site;

providing at least one translator on the clearinghouse site for converting data compliant with the merchant database format into data compliant with the partner database format;

receiving on the clearinghouse site a first set of data from the at least one merchant site, the first set of data being compliant with the merchant database format;

converting on the clearinghouse site with the at least one translator the first set of data into a second set of data compliant with the partner database format; and

sending from the clearinghouse site the second set of data to the at least one partner site.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of employing a clearinghouse site database format on the clearinghouse site, and using a merchant database format that is compliant with the clearinghouse database format.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

providing at least one further translator on the clearinghouse site for converting data compliant with the partner database format into data compliant with the merchant database format;

5 receiving on the clearinghouse site a third set of data from the at least one partner site, the third set of data being compliant with the partner database format;

converting on the clearinghouse site with the at least one further translator the third set of data into a fourth set of data compliant with the merchant database format; and

10 sending from the clearinghouse site the fourth set of data to the at least one merchant site.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of employing a clearinghouse site database format on the clearinghouse site, and using a partner database format that is compliant with the clearinghouse database format.

15 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of using product information data for the first and second sets of data.

6. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of using transaction data for the third and fourth sets of data.

20 7. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of linking a user to at least one merchant site from the at least one partner site via the clearinghouse site.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of providing a processor and a storage device on the clearinghouse site, the storage device being in communication with the processor.

5 9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of storing the at least one translator on the storage device, and using the processor to process the at least one translator.

10 10. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of providing a promotion on the at least one partner site for displaying product information of the at least one merchant site.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of storing the first set of data on the clearing house site.

15 12. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of storing the first and third sets of data on the clearing house site.

20 13. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of sending a third set of data from the at least one merchant site to the clearinghouse site, the third set of data being compliant with the merchant database format, using product information data for the first and second sets of data, and using transaction data for the third set of data.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of providing a commission payment from the at least one merchant site to the at least one partner site based on the third set of data, the commission payment being processed by the clearinghouse site.

5 *Art 317* 15. A system for managing sets of data across an interconnected computer network, the system comprising:

at least one merchant site employing a merchant database format, the merchant site enabling a user to conduct a transaction on the merchant site;

10 at least one partner site employing a partner database format different from the merchant database format, the at least one partner site having at least one of a link to the at least one merchant site and a display of transactional information from the at least one merchant site, the display of transactional information enabling a user to conduct a transaction with the at least one merchant site on the at least one partner site; and

15 a clearinghouse site in communication with the at least one merchant site and the at least one partner site, the clearinghouse site having at least one translator to convert a first set of data compliant with the merchant database format into a second set of data compliant with the partner database format, the clearinghouse site also capable of sending the second set of data to the at least one partner site.

20 16. The system of claim 15 wherein the clearinghouse site employs a clearinghouse site database format, and the merchant database format is compliant with the clearinghouse database format.

17. The system of claim 15 wherein the clearinghouse site further includes at least one further translator to convert a third set of data compliant with the partner database format into a fourth set of data compliant with the merchant database format, the clearinghouse site also capable of sending the fourth set of data to the at least one merchant site.

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18. The system of claim 17 wherein the clearinghouse site employs a clearinghouse site database format, and the partner database format is compliant with the clearinghouse database format.

19. The system of claim 15 wherein the first and second sets of data are product information data.

20. The system of claim 17 wherein the third and fourth sets of data are transaction data.

21. The system of claim 15 further comprising a link to at least one merchant site from the at least one partner site via the clearinghouse site.

22. The system of claim 15 wherein the clearinghouse site further comprises a processor and a storage device in communication with the processor.

23. The system of claim 22 wherein the at least one translator is stored on the storage device and is processed by the processor.

24. The system of claim 15 further comprising a promotion placed on the at least one partner site for displaying product information of the at least one merchant site.

5 25. The system of claim 15 wherein the clearinghouse site is capable of receiving a third set of data from the at least one merchant site, the third set of data being compliant with the merchant database format, the first and second sets of data are product information data, and the third set of data is transaction data.

10 26. The system of claim 25 further comprising a commission payment from the at least one merchant site to the at least one partner site based on the third set of data, the commission payment being processed by the clearinghouse site.

15 27. The system of claim 15 wherein the clearinghouse site is capable of receiving a third set of data from the at least one merchant site, the third set of data including transaction data in the form of an image source request, and the first and second set of data are product information data.

20 28. The system of claim 27 further comprising a commission payment from the at least one merchant site to the at least one partner site based on the third set of data, the commission payment being processed by the clearinghouse site.

29. The system of claim 15 wherein the storage device comprises a set of instructions to track transaction data between the at least one partner site and the at least one merchant site.

30. The system of claim 15 wherein the user completes a transaction on the at least one merchant site.

31. The system of claim 15 wherein the user completes a transaction with the at least one merchant site on the at least one partner site.

32. The system of claim 15 wherein the user completes a transaction on the at least one merchant site and the at least one partner site.

33. A system for managing sets of data across an interconnected computer network, the system comprising:

at least one merchant site employing a merchant database format, the merchant site enabling a user to conduct a transaction on the merchant site;

at least one partner site employing a partner database format different from the merchant database format, the at least one partner site having at least one of a link to the at least one merchant site and a display of transactional information from the at least one merchant site, the display of transactional information enabling a user to conduct a transaction with the at least one merchant site on the at least one partner site; and

a clearinghouse site in communication with the at least one merchant site and the at least one partner site, the clearinghouse site having at least one translator to convert a first set of data

compliant with the partner database format into a second set of data compliant with the merchant database format, the clearinghouse site also capable of sending the second set of data to the at

least one merchant site.

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B 32. A method for exchanging data between at least one merchant site and at least one partner site across an interconnected computer network, the at least one merchant site employing a merchant database format and the at least one partner site employing a partner database format, the method comprising the steps of:

10 providing a clearinghouse site in communication with the at least one merchant site and the at least one partner site;

providing at least one translator on the clearinghouse site for converting data compliant with the partner database format into data compliant with the merchant database format;

receiving on the clearinghouse site a first set of data from the at least one partner site, the first set of data being compliant with the partner database format;

15 converting on the clearinghouse site with the at least one translator the first set of data into a second set of data compliant with the merchant database format; and

20 sending from the clearinghouse site the second set of data to the at least one merchant site.